

City of Durham Parish Council
c/o 5 Alexandra Close
Ponteland
NE20 OBS

24 February 2019

Mr Colin Harding
Durham County Council Planning Department
Central/East Room 4/86-102
County Hall
Durham City DH1 5UL

Dear Mr Harding,

**DM/19/00324/AD: 4 no. vertical halo illuminated signs,
Student Castle Durham DH1 1RH**

I am writing on behalf of the City of Durham Parish Council to object to the above application for four illuminated signs at the Student Castle development in Claypath, Durham City.

The City of Durham Parish Council Planning Committee discussed this application at its meeting on 15th February 2019 and resolved to object on the following grounds.

The proposed signs are in a prominent location near the historic Market Place with its Grade II* Listed Town Hall and, in Claypath itself, the Listed Buildings of Christchurch and nos.32, 83, 91 and 91A, as well as The Big Jug Public House, and within the Durham City Centre Conservation Area.

Thus the Saved Policies on the Historic Environment, on Conservation Areas and on the setting of Listed Buildings are engaged. These policies are as follows.

Policy E21: The Council will preserve and enhance the historic environment of the district by requiring development proposals to minimise adverse impacts on significant features of historic interest within or adjacent to the site.

Policy E22: The Council will seek to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation areas within the City of Durham by not permitting development proposals which would detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area or its setting. All development proposals should be sensitive in terms of siting, scale, design and materials, reflecting, where appropriate, existing architectural details.

Policy 23: The Council will seek to safeguard listed buildings and their settings by....not permitting development which detracts from the setting of a listed building.

Furthermore, there is a Saved Policy specifically on advertisements:

Policy Q16: Advertisement consent will be granted for non-illuminated and illuminated signs provided that their size, design, materials, colouring and, in the case of illuminated signs, on commercial premises for appropriate uses and particular opening hours, their form of illumination would not be detrimental to visual amenity or highwaysafety. Particular attention will be paid to the impact of advertisements upon the character and setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of conservation areas in accordance with policies E6, E22 and E23.

The Parish Council has carefully examined the designs of the four proposed signs and the accompanying letter which explains that *“the purpose of the signs is to signpost the business and brand within the streetscene and directionally for those arriving at the scheme for the first time.”*

The Parish Council does not believe that it is necessary to have illuminated advertisements promoting the business and the brand, nor for those arriving at the scheme for the first time. There are very effective non-illuminated signs (eg for the Gala Theatre nearby and for other PBSAs). Indeed, having found the scheme for the first time it would appear unnecessary for the student residents to have to be reminded every day and night thereafter of where they live in Durham.

Accordingly, the Parish Council objects to the proposed signs being illuminated on the grounds of having an adverse impact on significant features of historic interest within or adjacent to the site, contrary to Saved Policy E21 of the City of Durham Local Plan 2004; would detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area, contrary to Saved Policy E22 of the City of Durham Local Plan 2004; would detracts from the setting of a listed building, contrary to Saved Policy E23 of the City of Durham Local Plan 2004;and detrimental to visual amenity whilst showing no particular attention being paid to the impact of the signage upon the character and setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to Saved Policy Q16 of the City of Durham Local Plan 2004. Should you be minded to approve this application, the Parish Council would wish this application to be called to Committee so that our case can be put to Councillors.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Shanley
Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council